

Blackheath Joint Working Party

Minutes of Meeting

19 September 2017, 7.30 pm

Venue: Age Exchange Blackheath

Attendees

| | |
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| Cllr Kevin Bonavia (chair) | London Borough of Lewisham |
| Cllr Aidan Smith | Royal Borough of Greenwich |
| Janine Whittaker | RB Greenwich, Events |
| Vince Buchanan | LB Lewisham Green Scene |
| Tony Butler | Friends of Greenwich Park |
| Lisa Lawrence | RB Greenwich, Parks |
| Gemma Buttell | Glendale |
| Nick Staebler | LB Lewisham |
| Margaret Dinkledein | Tidy Blackheath Group |
| Charles Paschoud | Showmans Guild |
| Mark | Showmans Guild |
| Roy | Showmans Guild |
| Sue Corlett | Hare & Billet Action Group |
| Marilyn Little | Westcombe Society |
| Sara Aziz | Sustrans, Route Manager |
| Kate Jury | Sustrans |
| Nick Harvey | LB Lewisham, Cycling |
| Trevor Thorne | Hare & Billet Pond volunteer |
| Eugene Kirk | Hare & Billet Pond volunteer |
| Shirley Broughton | Nature Conservation Group |
| David Walker | Blackheath Society |
| Helen Reeves | Blackheath Society |
| Phillip Craig | Greenwich Society |
| Marilyn Little | Westcombe Park Society |
| Sam Springate (minutes) | LB Lewisham |

1. Apologies and introductions

Cllr Amanda De Ryk, Cllr Mehboob Khan, Mike Norton

2. Minutes and matters

i) Accuracy

Tony Butler asked to be added to the apologies for last month's meeting, as he had sent them in advance.

ii) Matters arising

Storyboards

Helen confirmed that nearly at final draft and the storyboards should be ready for erection in October. Greenwich can do both.

Phase 2 Grassland Ecological Survey

The survey still needs to be uploaded to the RB Greenwich website. Nick Pond is arranging a meeting with LB Lewisham and RB Greenwich.

Litter in ditch near the Paragon

This is private land and the owner has been informed.

Coaches

A report from Greenwich on the latest position on road design is required, following a series of accidents.

The Public Liability Insurance

This has been covered for the pond, but Cllr Bonavia was not sure of the details of this.

ACTION: A copy of the liability insurance documentation is needed.

Toilet Block

The unused toilet block on the Heath still needs to be considered.

ACTION: the DRES section at RB Greenwich need to liaise with Cllr Geoff Brighty about his contact with the Crown, via Members Services.

The Blackheath Joint Working Party Constitution

14 days notice needs to be provided.

ACTION: Circulate 14 days ahead of November meeting.

3. Hare & Billet Pond Management Plan

A draft of the Management Plan for the Hare and Billet Pond was presented to the group, but a copy had not been circulated in advance. Some work has already started on maintaining the pond, due to the seasonal nature of the work.

KB wanted to ensure that all were happy with the plan. He suggested that the plan was circulated to all in the group and that some meet at the pond. Overall aim is to achieve a compromise where the majority are broadly happy.

ACTION: SS to circulate plan to all in the group.

ACTION: Vince to get a slot with Nick Pond. Shirley and KB to be kept informed. Environment Committee, Westcombe Society, Eugene and Trevor to be included. Aim to meet in first week of October.

4. Cycling on the Heath

Nick Harvey opened with comments about cyclists and pedestrians. He introduced the new Quietway Scheme across Blackheath - with the overall aim to create a scheme that suits both cyclists and pedestrians. They also want to implement it in a way that is sensitive to the character of the area. Restrictions are very difficult to enforce, so best to enable space to undertake both types of usage.

David Walker mentioned his experience of being told to 'get out of the way' by a cyclist. Suggested that sign focuses on shared space rather than one group being prioritised, with respect being shown by cyclists, which NH agreed with.

NH discussed the Quietways scheme - a non intrusive, inclusive cycling scheme for all demographics rather than focussing on cycling commuters. The proposed route goes from Bexleyheath Town

Centre to Greenwich, interlinking with another Quietway route. The aim of today's discussion was to get some pre-consultation feedback on the proposed plans.

Sara Aziz circulated printed copies of the plans. They were awaiting comments from TFL, who are funding the scheme. They want the scheme to be open and accessible.

Helen Reeves asked for more details. SA discussed print outs of the plans. Sue Corbett asked if this would encourage more commuters. SA advised it may do, but believes that other target groups would use this more.

David Walker asked about the signage. Advised that it could be low impact and tailored to meet surroundings.

Margaret Dinkledein asked how wide the paths would be? NH said that standardising the path width to a minimum of 3 metres is the best practice, following numerous studies on cycle schemes, for avoiding pedestrian / cycling conflict. The current path is 2-3 metres wide.

There were many varied viewpoints on this adjustment. Many objected to it on the basis that it would destroy the character and environment on the Heath. Others felt it made it more accessible for wheelchairs / buggy users and future-proofed the paths, especially as funding was available to improve the paths as part of this work. NH advised that the path could be designed in a way that complemented the surrounding grassland.

Many liked the idea of installing the bollards. NH also suggested that some money could be spent on public realm improvement, such as improving the font.

Kevin concluding the discussion by outlining the pro's and con's, then suggested that the group think on it, before making their views known at a future meeting (with NH returning) or through the upcoming Quietway consultation.

ACTION: Documents to be circulated to the group.

5. Showman's Guild

Janice Whittaker opened by informing the group of a new policy regarding Open Spaces, that no parking will be provided for any events. This policy appeared to have been implemented without following a public consultation process, as most of the group were not aware of this. Many big events have now cancelled (such as In the Night Garden and the Foodies Festival) and Blackheath may experience more congestion / parking problems as a result. This was a recent development, so there may be more unintended consequences to follow in the future.

The Showmans Guild gave a brief history of their organisation, which was established in the 1700's. 8 generations have been operating on the same area. This year, the guild had two longer events, rather than 3 shorter ones.

JW had advised that the Guild had received no complaints, which was very positive.

The SG advised that whilst they worked along with the position taken by the RB Greenwich and appreciate the protection afforded to the Green Belt, the lack of car parking had affected both families and those who were disabled. This had concerned the SG and they made as much effort as they could to help those affected, but acknowledged this was limited.

The group commented that On Blackheath could learn a lot from the courteous and professional approach taken by the SG.

6. The Point Formal Opening

An outline of the event on 1 October was provided; including details of a rock choir and the involvement of local drinking establishments. A discussion was held about borrowing a gazebo used for Blackheath Village Day – KB said as a ward councillor he would have no objection to it being borrowed for other purposes, so long as a few days' notice was provided. Group agreed to waive the formalities of the normal agreement that this event should provide a pre-application questionnaire, given the circumstances. LB Lewisham and RB Greenwich reminded all to submit paperwork for both this event and future events.

7. Duke Humphrey Road / Charlton Way

Cllr Aidan Smith referred back to item 4 - as it is involved in the Quietway Scheme proposal, which is currently being reviewed by the Department for Transport as it contains non-standard elements. Two design options have been included in the proposals, one maintaining the roadway and one cutting it off. The group said they preferred the latter. The proposal is due to be shown to Local Councillors in 2018, before going to the public for wider consultation.

8. On Blackheath - feedback

Some of the group commented that the noise was louder than previous years, particularly on the Sunday afternoon. However, there appeared to be less damage to the Heath and no reported ASB. The refuse collection was also better, with the pickers splitting the waste into recycling and non-recycling.

Whitefield's Mount was not used, but it was fenced off. It appears that this was for its own protection. Many commented it was a shame that the kids' area previously on this site hadn't been relocated.

Many commented that the operatives on site setting up the event were rude. They were also cutting branches. In contrast, the organisers had been charming. Damage that was made to a lamppost due to strong winds hitting a fence has now been fixed by Skanska.

9. Dates of future meetings

KB suggested the 3rd Tuesday of the following months: Jan, Feb (Public Meeting), March, May, July, Sept, Oct (Events Meeting) and Nov.

10. AOB

- i) Yellow Flag needs to be removed from Whitefield's Mount Pond. to speak to Nick Pond.
ACTION: Nick Pond to investigate
- ii) David Norton offered (remotely) to make a bee bank for free. KB advised that need to confirm in writing and ensure Nick Pond is happy.
ACTION: Member of the BJWP to speak to Nick Pond and David Norton.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.